



Mother Nature Activists Case chronology

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In July 2024, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court convicted 10 Mother Nature Activists, sentencing them ranging six to eight years imprisonment. Among them, Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson, Yim Leanghy, and Sun Ratha were sentenced to eight years in prison for plotting and insulting the King. Thun Ratha, Ly Chandaravuth, Long Kunthea, Phoun Keo Reaksmey, Pech Piseth Rey Reaksa were handed 6-year prison sentences for plotting. As the verdict announced, Long Kunthea, Yim Leanghy, Thun Ratha, Phoun Keo Reaksmey, and Ly Chandaravuth were arrested immediately. They were sent to five different prisons across the country, in an unprecedented move including the provincial prisons of Kandal, Kampong Speu, Pursat, and Preah Vihear, as well as Correctional Center 3 in Tbong Khmum Province. July 2026 marks two years since their imprisonment. Their bail applications have been denied repeatedly. Their appeal hearings have been postponed twice. This Case Brief provides a timeline for their case to date.

Case Timeline

16 JUNE 2021



Four Mother Nature activists, Sun Ratha, Seth Chhiv Limeng and Ly Chandarvuth were arrested while investigating river pollution in the Tonle Sap river. Yim Leanghy was arrested in Kandal province. It was reported that they were sent to General Commissariat of National Police for questioning before sending to the court. One of them was released without charge.

19 JUNE 2021

Sun Ratha, Ly Chandarvuth, Yim Leanghy and Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson, a deported Spanish national – were charged with plotting and insulting the king (lèse majesté) under Articles 453 and 437(bis), in relation to leaked footage of a Zoom meeting of Mother Nature activists. Sun Ratha, Ly Chandarvuth, Yim Leanghy, were then sent to pre-trial detention.



12 JULY 2021



The court issued arrest warrant for Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson. The court also issued arrest warrant for three other activists from Mother Nature group. It was unsure when they were charged.

22 JULY 2021

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court issued detention order for Long Kunthea, Phoun Keoreaksmey and Thun Ratha who had been imprisoned in a separate case of “incitement” since September 2020. They were additionally charged with “plotting”.



12 NOVEMBER 2021



Sun Ratha, Ly Chandarvuth, Yim Leanghy, Long Kunthea, Phoun Keoreaksmeay and Thun Ratha were released under judicial conditions and limiting their freedom of movement.

29 MAY – 24 JUNE 2024

After three years, the trial of this case began before the Phnom Penh Municipal Court on 29 May. It lasted until 24 June, during which eight hearings were conducted over five non-consecutive days.



2 JULY 2024



The Phnom Penh Municipal Court convicted 10 Mother Nature activists in the case of all charges. Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson, Yim Leanghy, and Sun Ratha were sentenced to eight years in prison for plotting and insulting the King. Thun Ratha, Ly Chandaravuth, Long Kunthea, Phoun Keo Reaksmeay, and three other activists were handed 6-year prison sentences for plotting. As the verdict announced, Long Kunthea, Yim Leanghy, Thun Ratha, Phoun Keo Reaksmeay, and Ly Chandaravuth were arrested immediately. They were sent to five different prisons across the country, in an unprecedented move including the provincial prisons of Kandal, Kampong Speu, Pursat, and Preah Vihear, as well as Correctional Center 3 in Tbong Khmum Province.

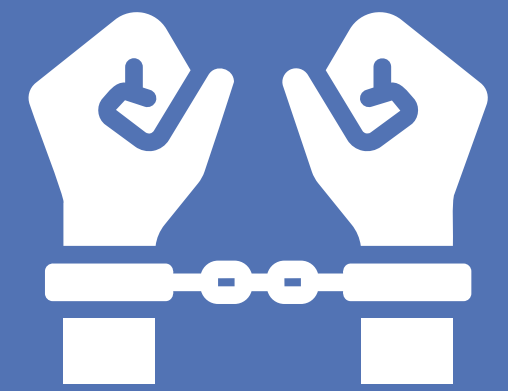
17 FEBRUARY 2025



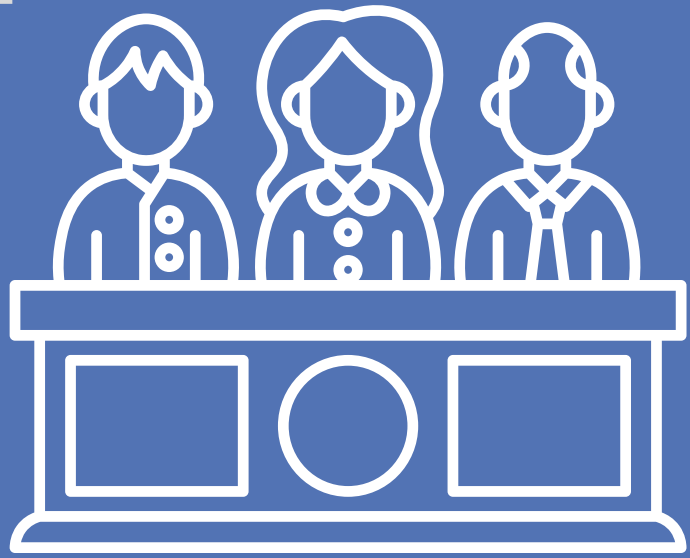
The first bail request of five imprisoned Mother Nature activists was held by the Court of Appeal. On 18 February, the Appeal Court issued its verdict denying bail for the activist. The court used article 205 of Cambodia Code of Criminal Procedure as the reason for bail denial.

30 APRIL 2025

The Supreme Court denied bail for five activists, upholding the decision of the Phnom Penh Appeal Court. The hearing was held on 23 April.



JUNE 2025



Their appeal trial was scheduled to be heard by the Phnom Penh Appeal Court on 26 June 2025. Just days before it was due to take place however, it was announced that the trial had been postponed – ostensibly due to problems delivering court summons to Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson and a number of defendants.

1 DECEMBER 2025

The Phnom Penh Appeal Court one more time denied a bail request of the five Mother Nature activists. This is second time their bail application was denied by the Court of Appeal. The Appeal Court use the same reason as its previous decision to deny bail.



23 FEBRUARY 2026



The Supreme Court held a bail hearing for five Mother Nature activists.

2 MARCH 2026

The Supreme Court once again denied bail requests of the five activists, upholding the Appeal Court decision.

MAY 2026



The defense lawyers received the letter from the Phnom Penh Appeal Court inviting to join the appeal hearing set for 2 June 2026. The invitation letter was issued by a Deputy General Prosecutor dated 29 April.

Days later, the court issued a notification about hearing postponement. There's no new date mentioned. The reason for this postponement was concerning "personal duty of the Presiding Judge".

2 JULY 2026:

This day marks two years of the conviction and imprisonment of Mother Nature activists. By this day, no appeal hearing taken place. Five activists have waited this entire time imprisoned, separated from each other.

Considering this significant delay, CCHR has assessed that not only does this impact their right to the presumption of innocence, but also that the repeated denial of their bail requests whilst they await their delayed appeal trial further undermines their right to liberty.

As a ratifying State of the ICCPR, Cambodia is therefore obligated to ensure that the Mother Nature activists are granted their appeal trial as expeditiously as possible. CCHR also takes the opportunity to reiterate its previous calls for the conviction of these environmental defenders to be overturned and to release the five environmental activists.



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Cambodian Center for Human Rights

July 2026

